

## LATE NEWS FROM THE WRITING AND PUBLISHING WORLD

H. S. CHAMBERLAIN'S  
WAGNER APPEARS;  
NEW PUBLICATIONS

A Model School Book That Would Bear Imitation—  
An Authoritative Work on Rugs.  
Pictures of British Art Treasures, of Old Concord,  
of California Homes, and of Farmhouses.  
Liberal Offering of Literature for Youth; Legends,  
Instruction, Biography, Classics.

Houston Stewart Chamberlain has for years been an ardent follower of Richard Wagner. So ardent has he been that he has christened one of his most amusing books "The Perfect Wagnerite." Mr. Chamberlain wrote a ponderous life of Wagner. It was heavy in more senses than one and yet light in value, for its fundamental tenet was that the king could do no wrong. It contained some interesting juggling with facts and dates. As a human document it threw more light on the personality of Chamberlain than on that of Wagner.

Mr. Chamberlain is still mentally dwelling in the period when the genius of Bayreuth and his artistic doctrines were in vogue. He is not satisfied that the battle for acceptance is over. He offers us another work, "The Wagnerian Drama" (John Lane Company), neither so fat nor so heavy as the biography, but quite as dull. We are instructed at the outset that the purpose of this new work is to inspire a better appreciation of Wagner as a dramatic poet.

A reading of the volume shows that the author holds that despite the immense popularity of Wagner's dramatic art the man still remains undiscovered. We are still regarding him as a composer of music for operatic texts, whereas he was the creator of the "word-tone-drama," an art work in which the poem was developed from ideas fitted only for musical expression and for which the medium of communication was an organic union of music and text simultaneously conceived, or at any rate inseparable by separation by cold, critical analysis. The creation of this method of expression was the achievement of Wagner, the dramatic poet, who should not be regarded as a common composer.

Mr. Chamberlain's thesis may present an illusion of novelty to those who are not Wagner scholars; to those who are it has nothing new to offer. No old soldier in the Wagnerian army has at this late date to learn the nature and purpose of the master's "word-tone-drama." Mr. Chamberlain's thesis is in its consistency and its aims from the older and more conventional rectitude of opera. Nor has he anything to learn about the artistic ideals upon which Wagner founded his drama of humanity freed from conventions.

Indeed it becomes strikingly obvious from the beginning of Mr. Chamberlain's volume that the author himself has nothing to give. His pen is continually busy transcribing passages from Wagner's prose works, and Mr. Chamberlain's office appears to be a running, or rather halting, commentary on them. So deeply is he immersed in the study of Wagner that he has developed an English style which reads like Ashton Ellis's translation of the Wagnerian legends. Those who can patiently read this tedious English and absorb education therefrom are models of devotion. But in these days when Wagner is the most popular of all German masters such mortification of the spirit is superfluous. The years do not seem to have altered Mr. Chamberlain. He perfectly preserves his pristine union of ponderosity of style with impenetrability of matter.

**NEW ORLEANS.**  
A model school book that would bear imitation in every large city has been prepared by Emma C. Richey and Eveleen P. Keen in "The New Orleans Book" (The Graham Company, New Orleans). The authors start with the idea that it is the duty of the public schools to teach their children all they can about the city they live in. They begin with the history and geography, necessarily they must tell a good deal about the settlement and about Louisiana at first, but they have done their task with great discretion and soundness. The story of the city itself. They describe the city, the buildings, old and new; the men of prominence, the institutions. They provide an abundance of pictures and maps. Then they tell about what is done in the city, about the industries, the commerce, transportation, public activities, and on, explaining what the children see going on before their eyes, and they conclude with a clear explanation of the working of the city government in all its departments.

The story of New Orleans is doubtless more picturesque and interesting to outsiders than that of most American cities. Not one, however, is lacking in this kind of material; history that is of great interest to those on the spot and activities that arouse the child's curiosity. Information about these things may be stigmatized as purely utilitarian, but it is more important to the child and the children's eyes, and they conclude with a clear explanation of the working of the city government in all its departments.

**The Story of Canada Blackie**  
By ANNE P. L. FIELD  
Introduction by Thomas Mott Osborne  
A truly wonderful, as well as a wonderfully true, story is this. True it is not only to the facts in the case, but to the deepest facts of the human soul. His letters here reveal in quick flashes the very heart of prison reform.

than the dribbles of scientific information with which it is the fashion to encumber the school curriculum.

## ILLUSTRATED BOOKS.

From its first appearance fifteen years ago John Kimberly Mumford's "Oriental Rugs" (Charles Scribner's Sons) has been accepted as the most authoritative work on the subject. It is now issued in a fourth edition at a reduced price, but with no impairment in the beautiful colored plates, because the mechanical improvements in the intervening years have made cheaper production possible. Introduction Mr. Mumford deprecates again that the manufacture of art rugs will soon be a thing of the past in the Orient; the war was extirpating the makers when he wrote and the rug industry has been the chief factor, the commercializing of the industry and the turning out of the set patterns called for by Western fashion had begun long before. The handsome quarto volume with its replete of pictures brings the knowledge of the history, the significance, the modes of weaving, the sources and the author's experience with Oriental rugs within the reach of all who admire them.

A miscellaneous collection of beautiful pictures arranged in no particular order, accompanied by a page of descriptive text, has been edited by C. H. Collins Baker under the title "The Art Treasures of Great Britain" (J. M. Dent and Sons; E. P. Dutton and Company). The large quarto size of the page allows full justice to be done to the pictures, which are of famous paintings, ancient and modern, of sculpture, of drawings by old masters, together with splendid colored representations of porcelain. All the objects were fully worthy of reproduction. The title suggests somehow the need of such a collection of records in view of the ruthless destruction in Belgium and France.

Literary and historical pilgrims are led very entertainingly and instructively around "Old Concord" (Little, Brown and Company) by Allan French. The book is a fine field of anecdote in addition to the knowledge preserved in books. The book is adorned with charming drawings by Lester G. Hornby, who conveys fully the poetic side of each famous site. It is an admirable memorial of a town dear to every American, made before it has been completely by modern improvement.

Descriptions of a dozen country mansions of very rich men are contained in Porter Garnett's "Stately Homes of California" (Little, Brown and Company). The book is a fine field of anecdote in addition to the knowledge preserved in books. The book is adorned with charming drawings by Lester G. Hornby, who conveys fully the poetic side of each famous site. It is an admirable memorial of a town dear to every American, made before it has been completely by modern improvement.

**THE INSANITY OF THE GERMAN LIEUTENANT**  
A book of short stories by August Strindberg bears as a title the name of the first, "The German Lieutenant" (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago). Here is a tale that reads queerly enough in the light of what is going on to-day. In the story the war with France in 1870 is going on, and this German lieutenant, newly married, is writing a letter to his wife. He describes in his letter certain unpleasant minor incidents of war. The other day a vineyard was destroyed as a matter of military necessity. The vines were cut down and half the grapes were torn up and tied in bundles to be piled together as barriers of defense. The great stems dripped with the juices of the crushed fruit. "It was said that the vines were forty years old. Thus we destroyed the work of forty years in an hour." And a great field of ripe corn was torn to shreds and trampled out in the rage of battle. "Do you think, my dear wife, that one can sleep quietly at night after such doings?" The lieutenant was a sensitive and imaginative man.

Worse was in store for him. Three French troops had been caught by the soldiers of his command. They were brave men. The lieutenant as he wrote could hear them playing billiards in the next room. France-tiers, as is well known, had special reason to dread the Prussian military policy of "fraternalizing." The lieutenant was nervous. He stopped writing the letter to his wife. He ordered bottles of wine to be sent to the prisoners. A galloping courier arrived with the expected order from the commanding general. In two hours the prisoners were to be shot without trial.

The lieutenant rode away to escape the scene. He did not serve him. He was insane. The story strongly pictures all this matter. To read is to feel the flesh creep. When the lieutenant recovered he went to Switzerland to live. In that beautiful and peaceful country he was met by a number of wild beasts with hairy breasts and limbs, who did not need clothing, and those who, while they waited for their bath, danced before the fire reminded him of fairy tales. The title of this disturbing tale.

Of the five other stories in the book one, "The Last Shot," is a story of the Thirty Years War. It is sufficiently strong and grim.



MRS. PEARL DOLES BELL  
AUTHOR OF  
"HIS HARVEST"  
(LANE)

are fine, do not always show what the house looks like.

Examples of more moderate taste will be found in abundance in Mary H. Northend's "Remodeled Farmhouses" (Little, Brown and Company), which describes the "improvements" made in twenty-two specific instances. Whether architectural purists will approve of these modifications or not is another matter. From the pictures we should fancy that the owner's taste alone was the criterion in some instances; in many others the results are encouraging for the "return to the land" enthusiasts.

Four delightful fairy tales by Oscar Wilde appear in a holiday edition under the title "A House of Pomegranates" (Methuen and Company; Brentano's), with sixteen colored plates by Jessie M. King. The illustrations are decidedly eccentric in composition and coloring; in the background the drawing and the tints the artist follows in the track of Mr. Dulac and Mr. Rackham, and where she leaves that work alone it is effective and charming. Into many of the pictures, however, she injects figures of eccentric form and violent spots of inharmonious color, a tribute, we suppose, to some of the new schools of painting.

The pretty colored pictures with which Helen Stratton illustrates Jean Luvins' "A Book of Myths" (T. C. and E. C. Jack; G. P. Putnam's Sons) are much more conventional in every way. The author deals chiefly with the familiar tales of the Greek mythology, but finds room also for the Norse and other Teutonic myths and at the end for the newly resurrected Irish legends.

## BOOKS FOR THE YOUNG.

The fall book season has opened with an unusually liberal offering of literature for youth on the part of the publishers, all children from those beginning to read to those ready to enter college being provided for. We will begin with the anthologies and collections. Remarkably good taste is shown in such a selection of illustrations. The selection seems to have been made in accordance with the prominence of the possessor rather than the artistic merits of the dwelling, and the pictures, while they

settled the Alabama question. The champagne was in good time, but the book has not since followed scrupulously the good example.

Another of the Strindberg stories here tells of a noble youth who found himself suddenly impoverished. From his splendid home he fled forth into a very strange world. He wore a velvet frock and handsome velvet jacket and his only pair of breeches of brilliant cloth. His few gold coins he counted and tucked away in his bosom. He had a horse when he started, but he did not keep it long. His first night stood he under a wild apple tree. For his breakfast he had some of a wild apple and the sap from a birch tree. This, however, was treacherous. He might have suffered a penalty if he had not discovered that he was in an hour. And a great field of ripe corn was torn to shreds and trampled out in the rage of battle. "Do you think, my dear wife, that one can sleep quietly at night after such doings?" The lieutenant was a sensitive and imaginative man.

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ETHEL HUESTON  
AUTHOR OF  
"PRUDENCE OF THE PARSONAGE"  
(BOBBY-MERRILL)

the American aboriginals that Frank R. Linderman repeats in "Indian Why Stories" (Charles Scribner's Sons), which Charles M. Russell illustrates well in color. In the framework of a boy's saving his town from destruction by telling tales to the savage conqueror Abbie Farwell Brown in "Kingsington Town" (Houghton Mifflin Company) sets several entertaining stories of adventure. There are colored pictures. A pathetic little story of suffering, rather too cruel for children, is "When Hannah Var Eight Year Old" (Frederick A. Stokes Company). The dramatic instincts of small children are catered to by Laura E. Richards in "The Big Brother Play Book" (Little, Brown and Company), in which the moral is as glaring as the play is short in each instance, and by Dorothy Cleverly in "A Handy Book of Plays for Girls" (The Seaside Publishing Company), intended for somewhat older and more sophisticated girls.

Stories and poems relating to the Nativity and Christmas time are contained in "Christmas in Legend and Story" by Elva S. Smith and Alice I. Hazeltine (Lothrop, Lee and Shepard Company, Boston). Illustrated with reproductions of famous pictures. The editors have shown admirable judgment in their selections. Curiosity should attract readers to "Little Verses and Big Names" (George H. Doran Company), a book published for the winter of 1915-16. The book is a great many well known people, most of whom have achieved distinction in other lines, to try their hands at verse. Some have tried to prose, some have contributed pictures. The interest in many of the poems is in the list and the President sends a note. Unchanged by the coming of war or the passing of years "Chatterbox" for 1915 follows in the wake of its thirty-seven predecessors, with its well known and popular miscellany of verse, prose and pictures (Dana Estes and Company, Boston). Built on the same lines, but for children of more tender years, is "Sailfield's Annual" (The Seaside Publishing Company, Akron, Ohio).

Instructive information is supplied by a variety of books, either directly or partly disguised by a story. An account of many interesting spots is given by Everett T. Tomlinson in "Places Young Americans Want to Know" (Appletons).

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EMILE VERHAEREN  
AUTHOR OF  
"BELGIUM'S AGONY"  
(HOUGHTON MIFFLIN)

they ought to know; the collection will attract older readers as well.

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The authority of Frederick the Great's own account of the Seven Years War is by no means accepted; the German General Staff many years ago did it respectfully but effectively in a series of volumes which were accessible to students before the present troubles. Yet it is upon the King's book, intended for French consumption, that Ronald Asch Hall bases his "Frederick the Great and His Seven Years War" (George Allen and Unwin; E. P. Dutton and Company). There are frequent quotations; the author's object being not so much to give an account of the war as to prove out of the own mouths the ruthlessness and the iniquity of the Hohenzollerns.

It is rather surprising that a book like Paul Leland Haworth's "George Washington, Farmer" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis) was written long ago. But the patriot and the soldier have long obscured the private man that the laborer and the thoughts that occupied the larger number of years of Washington's life have been passed over. This study of Washington's life at Mount Vernon, drawn from diaries, account books, memoirs and such material, will be a necessary supplement to the accounts of the Washington of history. It is a good sample of the right kind of realism and a very interesting book.

There is a certain amount of pardonable bragging about Canada's resources in Agnes C. Laut's "The Canadian Commonwealth" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company), as well as criticism of conditions the author does not like. She gives a readable description of the country, and discusses the chief problems that the Canadians are trying to solve. She gives a good deal of space to the matter of immigration. It is a book that Americans intending to cross the border would do well to read beforehand.

### WHY BERTHA RUNKLE CAN PICTURE GARRISON LIFE.

Bertha Runkle's name has heretofore been associated almost entirely with the so-called "historical novel." Her new book, "Why Bertha Runkle Can Picture Garrison Life" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company), is a picture album that calls for the cooperation of old and young. It shows the queer shapes that can be made by cutting into a folded strip of paper and is accompanied by jingles. Another form of juvenile decorative art is provided for in "A Child's Stamp Book of Old Verses" (Duffield and Company), the stamps being diminutive colored pictures by Jessie Wilcox Smith. They are too beautiful and artistic to be put to such use.

Last is a large quarto, the shape of the old time picture books, of stories by Priscilla Underwood, entitled "When Christmas Comes Around" (Duffield and Company), pleasant and suitable stories. They are illustrated by six large and beautiful colored pictures by Jessie Wilcox Smith, which it seems a pity to put in the unappreciative and destructive hands of small children.

### HISTORY-BIOGRAPHY.

It is a little hard that the animosities of the present war should rest on the character of the unlucky Attila, but as it is. Whether Edward Hutton would have written "Attila and the Huns" (E. P. Dutton and Company) in quieter times may be doubtful; in that case he would probably have omitted the invidious comparisons which appear at every turn. In his preface he settles the vexed question of who the Huns were by guessing that the Prussians are their descendants. He winds up with the phrase:

Books Received.

"The Life of John Jay," 2 vols. William Roscoe Thayer. (Houghton Mifflin Company.)

"Early American Cartoons," Walter A. Dyer. (The Century Company.)

"The Patriot Memories," Marchesa Madonna Petrucci. (Breuninger & Co.)

"The Romance of Leonardo da Vinci," A. J. Anderson. (Brentano's.)

"High Lights of the French Revolution," Hilaire Belloc. (The Century Company.)

"Memories of a Publisher, 1866-1915," George Haven Putnam. (G. P. Putnam's Sons.)

"My Childhood," Maxim Gorky. (The Century Company.)

"Paris Reborn," Herbert Adams Gibbons. (The Century Company.)

"Characters and Temperament," Joseph Jastrow. (Appletons.)

"George Hervey in English History," Albert Beebe White and Wallace Notestadt. (Harpers.)

"A Short History of Russian Music," Arthur Pougin. (Brentano's.)

"The Drama of Three Hundred and Sixty-five Days," Hal Cain. (D. B. Lippincott Company.)

"New Zealand in War and Work," William Lee Howard. M. D. (Edwards J. Clark, New York.)

"The Something-Different Dish," Marion Harris Nell. (David McKay, Philadelphia.)

"The Serious Profession," L. J. B. Becker. (The Writers' Publishing Company, Brooklyn.)

"Just for Fun," Annie Langdon. (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago.)

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